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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDG #1289 3171608
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0038
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
INFO WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0003
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0001
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 001289

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [DR](#)
SUBJECT: PRD WINS FIRST SKIRMISH IN ADVANCE OF MAY
CONGRESSIONAL/MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶11. (U) The first politically significant electoral contest before the May congressional/municipal elections was won by the opposition Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), as its candidate for the presidency of the Dominican Medical College (CMD) emerged victorious in balloting held on 11/11. Dr. Senen Caba, who was firmly backed by the PRD and current CMD President Dr. Waldo Ariel Suero, triumphed over Dr. Enriquillo Matos, the candidates of the ruling Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), by 54 to 46 percent of the vote.

¶12. (U) Matos initially vowed to challenge formally the results, complaining that military doctors and hospital residents were not permitted to vote, but subsequently acknowledged his defeat. Caba's supporters countered that Armed Forces physicians are correctly excluded from balloting as they could be ordered to vote for a particular candidate, and that the Government sought to influence hospital residents by giving each one a USD 1,400 bonus and a personal laptop prior to the election. Matos' followers also alleged that CMD President Ariel used organization funds and assets to support Caba's campaign. The Caba faction, in turn, noted that the Government employed its resources on Matos' behalf, including the active campaigning by Public Health Ministry Under Secretaries Lucas Gomez and Roberto Peguero.

¶13. (SBU) COMMENT: The PRD's victory in the CMD balloting will no doubt hearten the major opposition party and serve as a warning to the ruling PLD as both prepare for the May congressional/municipal elections. Nonetheless, the election should not be viewed as a harbinger of things to come, as the vote likely was heavily influenced by internal CMD issues. The College represents public health service doctors, who, under Ariel's leadership, have been agitating and striking unsuccessfully for increased salaries and better working conditions. Matos, who headed the CMD from 2006-08 and did not lead any strike activity during his tenure, promised to obtain a salary increase, pointing to his close ties with President Leonel Fernandez and the governing PLD. Most doctors, however, seemingly had more confidence that Caba, who is identified with Ariel's confrontational stance, has a better chance of bringing about the results they seek. END COMMENT.

Lambert